

FLOCKED FOAM LOTION APPLICATOR

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D E S C R I P T I O N

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] Field of the Invention. The present invention generally relates to applicators for lotions and more particularly to soft feeling applicators that are not lotion absorbent.

[0002] Background Information. Self application of lotion is a relatively easy thing to do to readily accessible parts of a person's body. For instance, applying lotion to one's hands is easy and convenient. However, when one attempts to apply lotion to less accessible body areas, for instance the middle of one's back, much difficulty can arise.

[0003] The use of long handled sponges for self cleaning one's back or self application of lotion is known in the prior art. Applicant's prior two patents, U.S. Patent Nos. D424,237 and D437,972 cover designs of handled back sponges for applying lotion to a user's back.

[0004] The advantage of using a sponge-like material is that it is relatively firm, yet soft, holding a shape and allowing for easy manipulation and for directed application of lotion. However, a disadvantage to utilizing a sponge-like material to apply lotion is the fact that a

sponge absorbs a quantity of the substance being applied, thereby resulting in at least some waste. When the lotion being applied is of a high quality and cost, it is desirable to be more efficient in the application of the lotion.

[0005] What is needed is an improved lotion applicator for applying lotions that overcomes the difficulties and inefficiencies of the prior art. The present invention solves this need.

[0006] Additional objects, advantages and novel features of the invention will be set forth in part in the description which follows and in part will become apparent to those skilled in the art upon examination of the following or may be learned by practice of the invention. The objects and advantages of the invention may be realized and attained by means of the instrumentalities and combinations particularly pointed out in the appended claims.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] In one embodiment of the present invention, the invented applicator is configured for use in applying a lotion to a body surface. This applicator embodiment comprising a head member, this head member having a body member, a padding member, and a plurality of fibers. It is preferred that the applicator further have a handle member with a gripping section and a head mounting section, this head mounting section attaching or configured for attaching to the head member, preferably at the body member through insertion into the body member.

[0008] The preferred body member comprises a shape cut or formed out of foam, preferably latex or polyurethane. This body member having an applicator side configured for attaching to said resilient pad or “padding member.” Preferably, this resilient pad configured for attaching to said body member at said applicator side through use of an adhesive. The preferred resilient pad comprising polyester foam. The resilient pad having or defining an outer surface opposite an inner surface. The inner surface configured for attachment to said applicator side of said body member. The resilient pad outer surface configured for flocking by flock fibers. This flocking preferably attached to the resilient pad through use of an adhesive. The preferred flock fibers comprising polyamide fibers.

[0009] Further, the purpose of the foregoing abstract is to enable the United States Patent and Trademark Office and the public generally, and especially the scientists, engineers, and practitioners in the art who are not familiar with patent or legal terms or phraseology, to determine quickly from a cursory inspection the nature and essence of the technical disclosure of the application. The abstract is neither intended to define the invention of the application, which is measured by the claims, nor is it intended to be limiting as to the scope of the invention in any way.

[0010] Still other objects and advantages of the present invention will become readily apparent to those skilled in this art from the following detailed description wherein I have shown and described only the preferred embodiment of the invention, simply by way of illustration of the best mode contemplated by carrying out my invention. As will be realized, the invention is capable of modification in various obvious respects all without departing from the invention. Accordingly, the drawings and description of the preferred embodiment are to be regarded as illustrative in nature, and not as restrictive in nature.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] Fig. 1 is a partial, cross-section, side view of one embodiment of the present invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0012] While the invention is susceptible of various modifications and alternative constructions, certain illustrated embodiments thereof have been shown in the drawings and will be described below in detail. It should be understood, however, that there is no intention to limit the invention to the specific form disclosed, but, on the contrary, the invention is to cover all modifications, alternative constructions, and equivalents falling within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined in the claims.

[0013] The present invention is an improved lotion applicator for applying lotions. While the present invention is discussed particularly with respect to "lotion applicators," such discussion is not intended to be a limitation. The present invention and the teachings herein could likewise be used with other substances, and these applications are likewise considered part of this disclosure.

[0014] The preferred embodiment of the present invention is shown in Fig. 1. Fig. 1 shows a lotion applicator 10 having a head member 20 configured for attachment to a handle member 90. While the present invention is discussed with respect to the embodiment shown, namely the embodiment utilizing a handle, it is also expressly envisioned that embodiments of the present invention will exist that do not include such a handle, but are configured for hand manipulation and engagement.

[0015] The head member 20 of the present invention further comprises a body member 30. This body member 30 is configured for engaging the head mounting section 92 of the handle member 90. In the embodiment shown, the head mounting section 92 is inserted into or formed within the body member 30. It is preferred that the handle be detachable so that the head member 20 can be washed separately from the handle. In the preferred embodiment of the body member 30, the body member comprises a foam. Examples of suitable foam include, but are not limited to: latex, polyurethane, etc. This foam utilized to present a dense, yet soft, support for the padding member and fibers.

[0016] The body member 30 having an applicator side 32 configured for attaching to at least one resilient pad or padding member 40. It is preferred that the body member connects to the padding member through the use of an adhesive 36.

[0017] The padding member itself having an inner surface 42 and an outer surface 44. The inner surface 42 configured for attachment to the applicator side 32 of the body member 30. The outer surface 44 of the padding member 40 configured for attachment to flocking fibers 50 thereby resulting in a lotion applicator 10 having at least a portion of a flocked outer surface.

[0018] These fibers 50 attaching to the padding member 40 through the use of an adhesive layer 46 or other standard means of flocking. For instance, the flocking layer can be applied using flocking technology. A preferred means of attaching the flocking includes orienting the flocking fibers 50 generally perpendicular to the underlying padding member 40. Flocking allows for the coating of a surface with a variety of materials and by a variety of methods. Flocking fibers and materials which could be successfully employed on the padding member 40 to provide a lotion applying surface include fibers of either organic or synthetic origin, such as cotton, wool, rayon, nylon, plastic, or other materials. The preferred material is a polyamide fiber having a titer of 1.7 dtex and a length of 0.75 mm. A viscose fiber is another suitable material.

[0019] These flocking materials may be chopped, cut to random lengths, or cut to precise lengths. The flocking material 50 may be applied to a substrate and then attached to the padding member 40 which has been coated with an adhesive 46, preferably water based. Another, more preferred, method is to sift the flocking materials 50 and then attract the flocking material 50 to an adhesively 46 coated padding member 40 using electrostatic charges.

[0020] In a typical electrostatic coating, the flocking fibers 50 are coated with a medium to make them electrically conductive or charged. The padding member 40 would then be coated with an adhesive 46. The adhesively coated padding member 40 would then be passed through a static charged field and the flocked fibers 50 would be then electrically drawn to it, causing them to become embedded in the padding member 40 adhesive surface 46. The static electricity makes the fibers erect and stand straight on end, orienting the fibers generally perpendicularly to the surface of the padding member 40. It will be appreciated that electrostatic flocking is known in the art and forms no part of this invention per se.

[0021] The preferred padding member 40 comprising a polyurethane-esterfoam (reticulated or unreticulated) having a thickness of 3.0 mm to 8.5 mm, which in conjunction with the flocking 50, comprises a soft surface to the touch of the user using the invented lotion applicator. Other padding member materials are also suitable, including but not limited

to polyether and polyester). This padding member 40 and flocking 50 preferably being impermeable to lotion and therefore the application of lotion to the flocking does not result in the lotion being absorbed into the sponge-like material of the head member 20.

[0022] It is preferred that the padding member 40 be flocked before application to the head member. The flocking can cover any portion of the padding member. The padding member can cover any portion of the head member.

[0023] While there is shown and described the present preferred embodiment of the invention, it is to be distinctly understood that this invention is not limited thereto but may be variously embodied to practice within the scope of the following claims. From the foregoing description, it will be apparent that various changes may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the following claims.